

NEW GRANTS ANNOUNCED

We are delighted that the **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** has awarded HOP a new 3-year, \$160,000 grant in support of our **Healthy Parents, Smart Kids – Oral Health Initiative**. The project will provide dental and dental hygiene services to 50 low-income families enrolled in our Moms & Mentors program. One “primary patient” in each family, selected through screenings and self-reports of dental need, will receive diagnostic and treatment services through partnership with a network of 11 local dentists and **WSUs Dental Hygiene Clinic**. HOP will supply wrap-around support services, including transportation, chair-side translation, expanded education in oral hygiene for the entire family, counseling reinforcement, childcare, and a monitored-use supply of Xylitol mints.

The **United Methodist Health Ministries Fund** has awarded us an additional \$79,134 in matching funds over the 3-year period of the pilot program. Network dentists will be providing discounted care and enrolled families will pay 20 percent of the service costs. Having discovered with each successive neighborhood survey that barriers to dentistry rank among the top concerns of Planeview residents, we are delighted to have the support of the two foundations to bring these new services to area families.

HEALTHY OPTIONS FOR PLANEVIEW

Wichita, Kansas

Healthy Options for Kansas Communities

Grants to fund dental care in Planeview

BY KAREN SHIDELER

The Wichita Eagle

Fifty families in Planeview will get low-cost dental care as the beneficiaries of a new effort to improve overall health in one of Wichita's poorest and most racially diverse neighborhoods.

The Healthy Parents, Smart Kids Oral Health Initiative is a three-year, \$300,000 project that will provide dental care to one member of each of the families, and preventive measures and education for the others.

A lack of dental care is one of the top three problems that Planeview residents consistently list when they're polled about their concerns, said Toni Pickard, director of Healthy Options for Planeview. The nonprofit neighborhood program will oversee the project.

Few of Sedgwick County's 172 general-practice dentists accept Medicaid patients, she said, and even fewer can afford to hire staff members who speak one of the 19 languages spoken by Planeview residents.

Research has shown that the germs that cause periodontal disease also may be responsible for increasing the risk of heart disease and premature birth, worsening diabetes and contributing to lung disorders. Mothers can spread the germs when they taste a food, then use the spoon to feed children.

Pickard said that's why the Healthy Parents, Smart Kids program is targeting families rather than individuals. The program is funded by grants from the Knight Foundation, the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and others, and through in-kind services.

To participate, at least one family member must be in Healthy Options for Planeview's Moms and Mentors program, in which young mothers meet with professionals to learn about nutrition, prenatal care, child development and other topics.

Members of the chosen families will be screened by dental hygienists from Wichita State University, who will decide which family member is most in need of dental care.

That member of the family will get up to \$750 worth of dental care over the course of a year. Forty percent of the cost will come from the grants, 40 percent will be absorbed by the dentists, and 20 percent -- or \$150 -- will be paid by the families.

"We know they don't want charity," Pickard said. "This is a partnership."

Healthy Options for Planeview will help make the dental appointments, arrange transportation and provide chair-side translators.

It also will provide the families with xylitol, in an effort to prevent more dental problems. Xylitol is a natural sugar that studies have shown hinders tooth decay. It often is used as a gum or mint; Pickard said the mint form probably will be used because it's cheaper.

Dental education classes also will be given, and attendance will be required. People who don't attend classes or show up for dental appointments will be dropped from the program.

The Knight Foundation will provide \$169,000 for the project. The foundation is active in many communities where Knight Ridder publishes newspapers, including Wichita, but it is independent of the newspaper company.

About \$79,000 will come from the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, a philanthropy dedicated to healthy Kansans. It also is granting \$100,500 to Wichita State University, to expand the dental hygiene department and to continue projects in which dental sealants are placed on the teeth of children who otherwise couldn't afford them.